

070698

Winnipeg, Man. Aug. 23, 1922.

Sir:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 3rd inst., regarding the Sewer Outlet into the Assiniboine River at Portage la Prairie, Man., and also with reference to the Resolution passed on the 24th ultimo by the Council of the above named City asking the Federal Government that an examination of the existing conditions be made.

As shown on the plan accompanying this report a canal was cut across the bend in the Assiniboine River about three miles below the Town of Portage la Prairie. This work was done in September 1908 with wheel scrapers at a cost of \$5,211.00. When completed this canal or channel was 20 feet wide at the bottom and the average depth was 7 feet. It was proposed at the time this channel was dug that a weir with a crest elevation about the ordinary summer level of water in the river, be built at the west end of the cut. The purpose of the weir was to maintain the present course of the river for navigation, and make the cut serviceable as a pass to carry the increased discharge during the freshet period. However, owing to the insufficiency of the appropriation the weir was not constructed. Up to 1913 there had been no necessity for a weir at that point as the water only passed through the cut twice. There is no navigation now in the Assiniboine and I am of the opinion that it will be almost impossible to place any structure across the river at that point owing to swiftness of water and unstable nature of banks. The channel is now at least 125 feet wide and the nature of material under bed of river consisting of fine sand and clay to a great depth would make the cost of any structure beyond justification.

Last year very little water went through the bend and this year it is absolutely dry. Every year during freshet time since its construction, this canal was eroded and became deeper and deeper until now it is as already stated about 125 feet wide and deeper than the old bed of the river around the bend. As a matter of fact a sand bar is forming at the junction of the two and I do not believe that the water will ever go through the old channel as it all silted up to a very large extent.

It is generally agreed that the canal has given good results and has greatly helped the situation when the Assiniboine is in flood.

It was built in the first place to increase the freshet discharge of the river and thereby prevent flooding or what was then considered the danger of flooding a portion of the Town of Portage on account of ice jams taking place in the bend of the river.

A request that the work be undertaken must have been in first place submitted, but there are no records of it in this office. Mr. R.H.M. Pratt of Portage states that at the time he drew the Engineer's attention to the fact that if the course of the river ever changed the Sewer Outlet would then be dry. No protest was ever entered by the City of Portage against the digging of the channel.

Sewerage is now emptied on to the dry bed of the river and is a nuisance as well as a menace to the health of the public. It is claimed that these existing conditions are due to the action of the Department in making this canal in 1908 and that the Department should entirely stand for the necessary expenditure in extending the sewer pipe to the river as shown on plan and marked A.C. or in building a Disposal Plant at the present Sewer Outlet. The Council are not in favour of a Disposal Plant as it would increase the cost of Maintenance which it is alleged is already too high.

MEIGHEN PAPERS, Series 3 (M.G. 26, I, Volume 120)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA